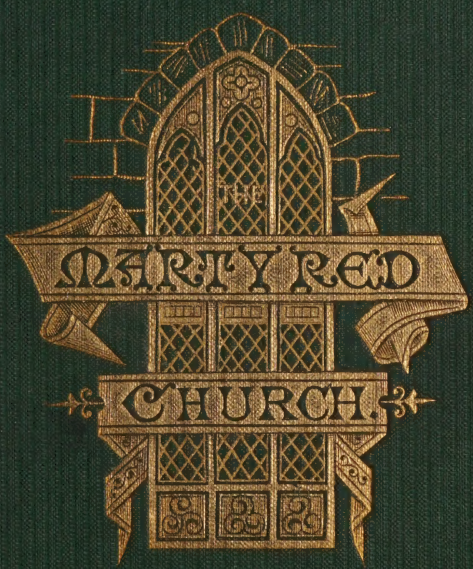
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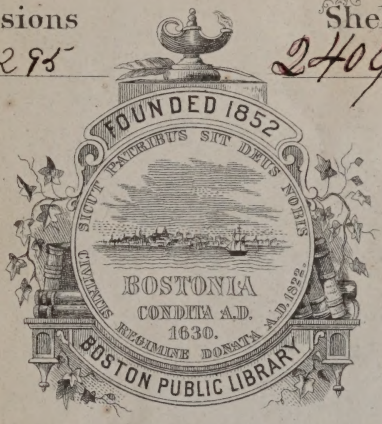

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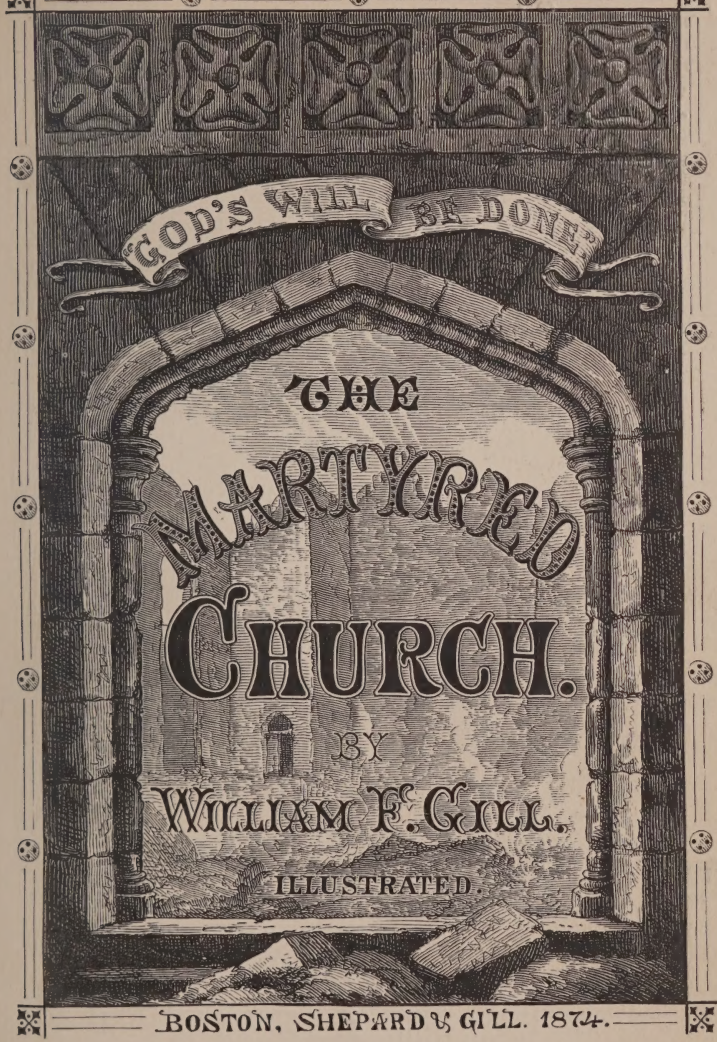

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TO THE

REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D.D.,

WHO, A WITNESS TO THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN THIS POEM,
HAS KINDLY ENCOURAGED THE AUTHOR BY HIS WARM
APPROVAL OF THE VERSES,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

INTRODUCTION.

THE poem printed in this volume is founded upon an actual incident of the Great Fire in Boston, which broke out on the night of November 9, 1872. Among the many startling scenes pictured on that terrible night, the wonderful illumination of Trinity Church on Summer Street, which occurred previous to its destruction by fire, made an impression upon those who witnessed it never to be forgotten by them. The peculiar effect produced can be but inadequately described by any powers of imagination and pen.

This poem was not written with a view to publication, but has been issued in this form by the request of many interested, as a memorial of the grand old church whose last service was witness to a baptism of fire.

With this apology for what he knows is too humble a tribute to have deserved the encomiums which have been bestowed upon it, this little work is offered as a souvenir of Old Trinity.

W. F. G.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

DRAWN BY HAMMATT BILLINGS.

ENGRAVED BY JOHN ANDREW AND SON.

I. Title-page. The Doorway of Trinity Church.

II. The Alarm.

"In yonder slumbering city's mart
Wild sounds are heard at midnight-hour:
A surging mass its peace invades;
Black, reeking clouds above it lower."

III. The Mystic Light.

"From chancel and from vaulted roof
Still poured the light in wondrous streams,
Silv'ring each arch and coigne and nook,
From nave to roof, in dazzling gleams."

IV. The Vision.

"For to my rapt, transported gaze
Appeared the glory overhead
Of heaven's alabaster gates,
With glist'ring bars of gold so bright,
That dazzled sight and sense and soul
With mystic, molten, living light."

V. The Martyred Church.

"'Midst garlands of destroying flame,
Grand through the lurid heavens, shone
The turret of the martyred church,
As if to say, 'GOD'S WILL BE DONE!'"

ON yonder slumb'ring city's mart

Wild sounds are heard at midnight hour ;

SURGING mass its peace invades;

Black, reeking clouds above it lower;

From frenzied throats hoarse shouts ring forth,

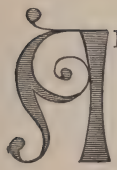
And sharp alarms clang out yet higher;

Strong hearts are sick with awful fear,

Appalled before the demon fire.

REMOTE from blasting flame and smoke,
Which now have raged full many an hour,
Calmly from out the quiet street
An old church lifts its gray hewn tower.
Wand'ring that night, half chilled, half crazed,
I paused before that old church-door:
Its hoary calm my gaze allured, —
Grim monument of days of yore.

AND solemn musings filled my soul,
As there I stood strangely apart:
No voice that fateful stillness broke;
No sound, save of my throbbing heart.
Wild clouds hung o'er me, black and dense;
And darker loomed the great church-spire,
As frowning on the distant glare
Which menaced doom of flame and fire.



ND lo, as thus in awe I stood,

Aghast I saw a mystic light

Stream from below the great oak-door:

The whole church glowed in splendor bright.

Sweet bells, with joyous ringing peal,

Chimed forth a carol o'er my head;

The tower above, by radiance lit,

The strange white light majestic shed.

SOME wedding grand these sounds bespoke,
But yet was seen no bridal pair;
No voices answered to the notes:
While all seemed life, no life was there.
From chancel and from vaulted roof
Still poured the light in wondrous streams,
Silv'ring each arch and coigne and nook,
From nave to roof, with dazzling gleams.

WITH closèd eyes in fear I knelt,
While wonder mingled with my dread;
For to my rapt, transported gaze
Appeared the glory overhead
Of heaven's alabaster gates,
With glist'ring bars of gold so bright,
That dazzled sight and sense and soul
With mystic, molten, living light.

ONE moment knelt I thus appalled;

One moment all my soul did thrill

With such exalted ecstasy,

That every pulse and nerve stood still:

Yet when I oped my eyes to sense,

Around me forked great tongues of fire;

My whole frame burned with racking pain;

The gray old church was one vast pyre!

NO more shone out the heavenly light ;

Th' angelic strains were heard no more ;

Relentless, swooping to his prey,

Burst forth the fiery demon's roar.

The ghostly bells, with hollow groan,

Rung now by some unearthly power,

Moaned, as with gasping, fevered tongue,

One falt'ring peal from out the tower ;

AND, startling all the morning air,
The organ's anguished dying-notes,—
Soft, sad, and low despairing wails,—
Welled from the parching metal throats.
'Midst garlands of destroying flame,
Grand through the lurid heavens, shone
The turret of the martyred church,
As if to say, GOD'S WILL BE DONE!

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